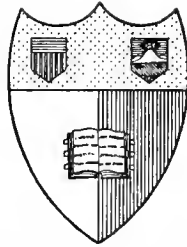


Wason
Z3106+
L35

ASIA



Cornell University Library
Ithaca, New York

CHARLES WILLIAM WASON
COLLECTION
CHINA AND THE CHINESE

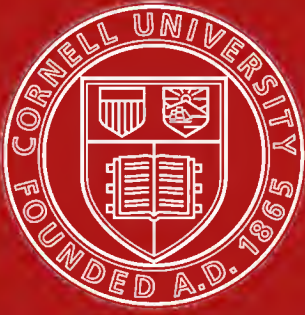
THE GIFT OF
CHARLES WILLIAM WASON
CLASS OF 1876
1918

Cornell University Library
Z 3106.L35

American scholarship in Chinese history



3 1924 023 970 654 W55,0v61



Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

A M E R I C A N S C H O L A R S H I P I N C H I N E S E H I S T O R Y

A PAPER READ AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

December, 1917, unpublished

By

Kenneth Scott Latourette

PREPARED AND BOUND FOR THE LIBRARY OF CHARLES W. WASON, ESQ.
CLEVELAND: 1918

Wason
Z 3106+
L 35

W 2432

KENNETH SCOTT LATOURETTE
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY
DENISON UNIVERSITY
GRANVILLE, OHIO

January 22, 1918.

Mr. Arthur H. Clark,
Caxton Bldg.,
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Mr. Clark;

I am glad to have
your letter of January 18th, and as you
request, I am enclosing a copy of my paper
on "American Scholarship in Chinese
History". This, as you know, happens
to be now the only copy in my possession
and I will be glad if you will return
it to me after you have had a copy made
of it. I am glad that it can be of
service to you.

Very truly yours,

K. S. Latourrette

AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP AND CHINESE HISTORY

It ought hardly to be necessary in these days to point out the interest and importance of the history of China as a field for the scholarship of the West. No other existing nation has a continuous history reaching back to so remote a period. Few nations have influenced by their culture a larger section of mankind, and to few has it been given to dominate for so many centuries so large a proportion of the population or so fertile a part of the globe. No great people of today, not even the Russians, presents a more interesting example of transition, and it is doubtful whether the future of any other nation is more uncertain or more fraught with possibilities of peril or of happiness for the entire world. In no other, taking its centuries as a whole, is historical material more abundant or more worthy of the study of the painstaking student. In sharp contrast to the neighboring peoples of India, the Chinese have almost from the beginning had the historical sense and have left to posterity a mass of material, much of it carefully and critically collected, which is at once the joy and the despair of the Occidental scholar.

European students have for some two centuries been gradually awakening to the possibilities of the field. In a really voluminous

literature, which, it must be said, is by no means well apportioned among the various dynasties and epochs, they have made a good beginning at interpreting Chinese development to the world. France, from the time of the early Jesuits missionaries, has not lacked sinologues of note. Nearly a hundred and fifty years separate Father de Mailla's translation of the T'ung Kang Chien Mu into the thirteen handsome but not entirely flawless volumes of his Histoire Generale de la Chine, and Chavannes still uncompleted, masterly, and painstaking translation of Seu Ma Ch'ien. The interval has been filled with many names that are household words to students of things Chinese, and the files of periodicals in French, such as the Journal Asiatique and T'oung Pao are substantial evidence of the continuous output of work of a high order. During the last Century England has produced numbers of scholars who have added vastly to the West's understanding of Chinese history. Such men as Legge, Wylie, Parker, Giles, and Putnam Weale, to mention only a few of the more outstanding figures, will long be remembered as noteworthy contributors to the world's knowledge of the remote and the more recent history of the Middle Kingdom. Each year the journals of the Royal Asiatic Society, and of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society make useful additions to our stock of information. German scholarship, although rather more recently applied to China than has been that of England and France, or even that of the United States, has made the world its debtor. To indicate how noteworthy has been the Teutonic contributions, one need only point out that America's two most eminent living

students of China's earlier history, Professor Hirth and Dr. Laufer, are both of German birth and training.

One might, from the standpoint of America's part in Far Eastern affairs, expect from American-born scholars, especially those of the present generation, a contribution to the world's knowledge of Chinese history which, if not as noteworthy as that of our European cousins, would at least not lag far behind in volume and quality. The chief sources of European sinologues have been the consular and diplomatic service, the foreign contingent of the Chinese customs staff, and the missionary body. Now, the personnel of the American consular establishment in China has not, until very recently been worthy of comparison in training and scholarship with that of England, nor has the customs staff contained as many Americans as it has Englishmen and Continentals. American missionaries, on the other hand, are today more numerous than those from any other single country. They have excelled particularly in educational work and on the whole are of a high average of training and ability. When one remembers the men whom the English missionary body has furnished to Chinese historical scholarship, Legge, Wylie, MacGowan, Soothill, and Edkins, for example, one expects to find names of at least equal note in the ranks of the American churchmen.

It must be confessed, however, that on the whole a careful survey of the field of American historical scholarship in things Chinese begets in one a feeling of disappointment. Only two or three of our diplomats and consuls have made literary contributions of note, and

most missionaries have seemingly been too much engrossed in their immediate problems of organization, administration, and propaganda to devote much time to a scholarly study of the land in which they work. In America itself our colleges and universities, in spite of the fact that their hospitable curricula have made room for nearly every field of human knowledge, have paid but scant attention to China. In perhaps thirty institutions the subject is touched on in some way, but usually only in a semester survey course of the Far East. In only three can there be had anything approaching an adequate preparation for a thorough study of the Chinese language, institutions and history. So great has been the dearth of American sinologists that two of these three institutions have had to go to Europe for scholars to fill their chairs of Chinese. The Journal of the American Oriental Society although, it has maintained a high standard of scholarship and has published in its pages a few valuable articles on Chinese historical subjects, has not achieved the size nor the circulation of the trans-Atlantic periodicals of similar aim.

The early years of American Chinese scholarship seemed to augur well for the future. Dr. S. Wells Williams, one of the first to represent the American church in China, was a master of the language and literature, and through a long life as missionary, diplomat, and finally as professor at Yale, made notable contributions to the foreigners' knowledge of his adopted country. His dictionary is still

in use and his Middle Kingdom is probably even now the best well-rounded survey of China and Chinese civilization as they were forty years ago. The historical chapters of the Middle Kingdom furnished in their day an excellent and well proportioned compendium of Chinese history as the latter was then known to the best foreign scholars. Most of the many articles that appeared from Dr. Williams' pen were, however, not on strictly historical subjects. It is a pleasure to add that the work of the father has been ably supplemented by that of his son, Professor Frederick Wells Williams of Yale, whom we are honored to have with us today. By his assistance in the revision of the Middle Kingdom, by his lives of his father and of Anson Burlingame, by his many published articles, his more than two decades of teaching, and the years when, as an advocate of a more careful study by Americans of the history and current problems of the Far East, his was almost a solitary voice crying in the wilderness. Professor Williams has made greatly his debtor all American students of the history and the problems of China.

The elder Williams and the Rev. E. C. Bridgman, another of the early missionaries of the American Board, were chiefly responsible for the Chinese Repository. This publication was started by Bridgman in 1832 and had as its chief purpose the spreading among foreigners of information concerning China. It continued until 1851 and within its pages are to be found numerous articles of a strictly

1 The first edition appeared in 1848 and the last revision in 1883.

historical nature and covering a wide range of subjects. Few, if any, of these papers can be called full or final contributions to our knowledge of Chinese history: they were not meant to be that. The publication served a useful purpose in its day, however, and gave brighter promise for the future of American scholarship than has yet been fulfilled.

The only other missionary whose historical contributions approximate in volume those of Dr. Williams or Mr. Bridgman has been Dr. W. A. P. Martin. Dr. Martin really belongs to the older school of missionaries, although death has only recently brought to an end his more than a half-century in China. His Hanlin Papers, which appeared in 1880, is of his many publications the one of most interest to historians. It is really a collection of studies, some of which had previously appeared in print and of which the most widely known, a description of international law in ancient China, is an out-growth of Dr. Martin's interest in the education of Chinese Diplomats. He has a good volume on The Awakening of China (New York No. 7), and another on The Silk in Peking (published in 1900). Dr. Martin was, however, only incidentally an historian and his permanent contributions to China were chiefly made in other lines of service. The same must rather regretfully be said of virtually all the American missionaries of the present generation. Few have published enough to be worthy of remembrance as historians. President F. L. H. Pott, of St. Johns University, Shanghai, has given us an excellent and

2
 widely used, but very brief summary of Chinese History. The Rev.
 Frank H. Chalfant made a noteworthy collection of specimens of early
 Chinese writing and has left a valuable but short treatise on the
 3
 subject, and a still shorter paper on the weights and measures of
 4
 the Ch'in Dynasty. The Rev. Dr. Arthur H. Smith has given us an
 account of the Boxer uprising, valuable for what he knew through
 5
 personal observation. His studies of Chinese life in his Chinese
 6
Characteristics and Village Life in China 7 may be of value to the
 future student of conditions that are fast passing. It is worth
 while noting, as well, an interesting paper by Dr. John C. Ferguson
 8
 on the great radical of the Sung Dynasty, Wang An Shih.

Even on the philosophers and the religious history of China where
 theologically trained men would be naturally most interested,
 American missionaries have published but little that is now of value.
 Dr. F. G. Henke has recently given us a capital translation of Wang
 Yang Ming, whose thought had so much influence in the Japan of
 Tokugawa times. That is about the only work that we need notice,
 however. It has been left to Paul Carus, through his Open Court
 Publishing Company, which brought out Dr. Henke's work, to provide
 9
 an American translation of the Tao Teh Ching and essays on Chinese
 10
 thought and Chinese philosophy.

- 2 Latest edition, Shanghai, 1915.
- 3 In Memoirs of the Carnegie Museum, Vol. 4, No. 1, Sept. 1906.
- 4 Journ. N.C.B.R. As. Soc. Vol. 35. (1903-1904) pp. 21-25.
- 5 China in Convulsion.
- 6 Shanghai, 1890.
- 7 F. H. Revell, 1899.
- 8 Journ. N.C.B. Roy. As. Soc., Vol. 35, pp. 65-75.
- 9 Lao Tze's Tao Teh Ching. Chicago, 1898.
- 10 Chicago, 1898.

Our diplomats and consuls have seemingly been even about as little historically inclined as have our missionaries. There are only three names on our list that are worthy of note. These three, however, by the excellence of their work have done much to atone for the negligence of the rest of their colleagues. Dr. E. T. Williams, whose scholarly paper at our meeting last year placed us all in his debt, has given us two or three other studies which make¹¹ us wish that he might have more leisure for such things. The work of the late William Woodville Rockhill by its erudition and painstaking thoroughness places him in the front ranks of sinologists. He has given us along with other shorter studies, The Life of Buddha and the Early History of his Order derived from Tibetan Works, ---- followed by Notices of the Early History of Thibet and Khoten (London, 1884); Diplomatic Missions to the Court of China, published in the¹² second volume of the Review of this association; Treaties and Conventions with or Concerning China and Korea, 1894-1904, together with¹³ various State Papers and Documents Affecting Foreign Interests; Korea and its Relations with China;¹⁴ and China's Intercourse with Korea from the Fifteenth Century to 1895.¹⁵ Together with Professor Hirth he has given us a translation of Chau Ju-Kua's work on Chinese and Arab

11 Hung-Wu and his Capital, in Jour. N.C.B.R. As. Soc., Vol. 26, No. 2, 1891-2, pp. 42-174, and Witchcraft in the Chinese Penal Code. Ibid-Vol. 28 (pp. 61-96) 1901.

12 Am. Historical Review, Vol. 2, pp. 427-442, 627-643.

13 Washington, 1904.

14 Journ. of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 13 (1888).

15 London, 1905.

trade in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Minister Paul S. Reinsch, while still a member of the faculty of the University of

Wisconsin, gave us his well known Intellectual and Political

17

Currents in the Far East, so valuable to students of recent

Oriental history.

One must acknowledge with shame that American historians have contributed but little to the story of European diplomacy in the Far East. We do not even have an adequate account of our own relations with China. Professor Stanley K. Hornbeck has recently given us an

18

excellent study, Contemporary Politics in the Far East. There is an interesting but rather sketchy account of American relations in the

19

Pacific and the Far East by James M. Callahan. The volume, American

20

Diplomacy in the Orient, by the late John W. Foster, is really our best book in the field, but even that is too brief. Perhaps the

speaker will not be considered too presumptuous if he mentions his own study, The History of Early Relations Between the United States

21

and China, 1784-1844, which may at least boast the virtue of being the only complete survey of the years that it covers. There are a few

biographies of noteworthy American missionaries, but there is no adequate history of American missions as a whole or, one may add, of

the general missionary movement in China. Mr. Frank E. Hinckley has a

22

fairly good-sized account of American consular jurisdiction in the Orient.

16 St. Petersburg, 1912.

17 Houghton Mifflin, 1911.

18 New York-1916.

19 American Relations in the Pacific and the Far East, 1784-1900, Baltimore 1901.

20 Houghton Mifflin, 1904.

21 Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1917.

22 American Consular Jurisdiction in the Orient. Washington, 1906.

There is quite a mass of contemporaneous material, largely of a controversial nature, on Chinese immigration and the exclusion acts, but no one has yet given us an unbiased, full, and scholarly treatment of that important phase of our relations with Asia.

In sharp contrast with French and German Scholarship, no American-born student who has not been directly or indirectly connected with the missionary or diplomatic bodies, has ever given himself to Chinese history as his major field. A few have, however, produced works which are of value to the historical student. Thus we have an account of the international law and diplomacy of the Russo-Japanese War by Mr. ²³ Amos S. Hershey; an admirable and sympathetic historical account of ²⁴ art in China and Japan by the late E. F. Fenollosa; a history of the ²⁵ Boxer uprising by Dr. Paul H. Clements; and a narrative of the Revolution of 1911 in a rather sketchy newspaper style by an eye witness, ²⁶ Edward J. Dingle. Dr. Ellsworth Huntington's suggestive studies on the geography and climate of Central Asia cannot be ignored by students of the older periods of China's history.

Fortunately for the United States, the all too scanty list of notable American sinologues has had added to it three men of foreign training, Professor Friedrich Hirth of Columbia, Professor A. Forks of the University of California, and Dr. Berthold Laufer of the Field Museum of Natural History. All of these are of German birth and

²³ The International Law and Diplomacy of the Russo-Japanese War, Macmillan, 1906

²⁴ Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art, London.

²⁵ The Boxer Rebellion, a Political and Diplomatic Review, New York. (Columbia University)

²⁶ China's Revolution, Shanghai, 1912.

education and have had extended residence and travel in China. Professor Hirth, especially, has given to the world, both before and after coming to this country, a very large number of important articles and books, the mere enumeration of which would lengthen this paper beyond its proper limits. He has written on a wide variety of subjects, but his principal contributions have been made on early Chinese intercourse with the West.

27

His China and the Roman Orient has long been the standard authority in its field, and we look forward eagerly to the revision which he is promising to give us. We have already noticed his translation of Chao-Ju-Kua made jointly with Mr. Rockhill. This same subject has called forth several articles from his pen, and his interest in it have led him into studies of various phases of Chinese commerce with the nearer East and of Chinese geographic knowledge during the time of our middle ages. His Ancient History of China, while at times tantalizing in its brevity, is probably the best comprehensive account of the period to be found in any Western language.

Professor Forke has concerned himself primarily with the philosophers of China, and his translation of the rather voluminous Lun Heng of the heterodox philosopher Wang Ch'ung of the first century B. C. is an enviable example of painstaking scholarship and wide erudition.

Dr. Laufer has contributed principally to our knowledge of Chinese archaeology. A list of his publications, like that of Professor Hirth's, would carry us far beyond the allotted time. Merely as examples of what his prolific pen has given us, may be mentioned Jade, A Study in Chinese

28

Archaeology and Religion; Chinese Grave Sculptures of the Han

Period; Chinese Clay Figures. Part 1. Prolegomena on the History

30

of Defensive Armour; Arabic and Chinese Trade in Walrus and Norwhal,

31

Ivory; and The Beginnings of Porcelain in China. Fortunately for

us, Dr. Laufer is really just at the beginning of his work and can reasonably look forward to many years of productive scholarship.

In enumerating the students of other nations who by coming to us have made us their debtors, we must not forget Professor Asakawa, of Yale. While his work has been almost exclusively in Japanese history, his field has occasionally touched on China, especially in his account
32
of the Russo-Japanese War, and we cannot but wish for our own selfish interest that he might more frequently give us books and articles on the history of Chino-Japanese relations.

One final form of the American contribution to the study of Chinese history is in a sense an indirect one, the training of Chinese in American institutions in the United States and the Orient. Several thousand of these students are to be found in the schools and colleges maintained by American missions in China and some fifteen hundred are now in the United States. It is reasonable to suppose that the majority of these must come to some extent under the influence of the ideals and methods of American historical scholarship and that at least a few will be stimulated to apply themselves to the study of the history of their native land. Already there are indications that this is to be

29 London, 1911.

30 Chicago, 1914.

31 Chicago, 1917.

32 The Russo-Japanese Conflict, Its Causes and Issues, Westminster, 1904.

the case. Doctoral dissertations by Chinese on historical subjects have appeared from time to time, particularly in the Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law. As yet these have done little more than give promise of a useful future for their authors, but it is to be hoped that this promise will in many cases be fulfilled and that Chinese scholars, trained in the canons of Western historical criticism, will before many years be reinterpreting the past of their native land for the benefit of their own people and the peoples of the Occident.

One cannot leave the subject of this paper without expressing a regret that American historical scholarship has paid so scant attention to China. Were there signs of improvement one might take hope, but our best work by native Americans is mostly in the past and there is but little indication that recruits are arising from our graduate schools to take the places of those who have gone. Very, very few of our doctoral dissertations are on Chinese subjects, the publications from our present missionary and diplomatic bodies give us small encouragement. A discussion of the possible remedies for the situation lies outside the scope of this paper, but the speaker will perhaps be pardoned if he expresses his conviction that the remedies must be found and his hope that they will be sought for and applied by the members of this Association.

Kenneth Scott Latourette, Professor of History.

Denison University, Granville, Ohio

January, 1918.

